

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L REYKJAVIK 1553

EXDIS

DEPARTMENT PASS TO SECDEF AND CINCLANT

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR MARR IC NATO

SUBJECT: IDF RETENTION ISSUE - CONVERSATION WITH FOREIGN MIN

REF: (A) REYKJAVIK 1531: (B) REYKJAVIK 1542

1. I HAD PRIVATE LUNCHEON SESSION WITH FONMIN AGUSTSSON TODAY.

FOLLOWING ARE PERTINENT COMMENTS:

2. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FONMIN AND PRIME MINISTER: FONMIN MENTIONED DETERIORATION AND STATED PRIMEMIN NOW MAKING ALL DECISIONS IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND IN THIS HE IS BEING INFLUENCED BY PARTY CONSIDERATIONS AND BY THORARINN THORARINSSON. HE ALSO MENTIONED ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRESSIVE PARTY DEFENSE COMMITTEE (REFTEL (B) PARA 1) WHICH WILL HOLD ITS FIRST MEETING DECEMBER 28. FONMIN COMMENTED COMPOSITION NOT FAVORABLE TO OUR CAUSE IN VIEW OF PRIMIN'S SHIFT IN SENTIMENT. HE SUGGESTED I SEEK PRIVATE MEETING WITH PRIMIN DECEMBER 26 OR 27 TO INFLUENCE HIM AWAY FROM ACTION DISCUSSED BELOW.

3. RENUNCIATION OF US-ICELAND DEFENSE AGREEMENT: FONMIN BELIEVES (RPT BELIEVES) THAT PRIMIN WILL SEEK PROGRESSIVE PARTY DEFENSE COMMITTEE APPROVAL FOR LEGISLATION TO BE SUBMITTED JAN 21
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WHEN ALTHING RECONVENES AUTHORIZING GOI TO RENOUNCE THE AGREEMENT IN EVENT US-GOI NEGOTIATIONS BREAK DOWN AND THE ONLY POSITION GOI WILL ACCEPT IS A COMMITMENT BY USG OF EITHER (A) COMPLETE WITHDRAWAL OF ALL FACILITIES WITHIN FIVE YEARS SO AS TO REVERT TO

THE 1949-51 SITUATION, OR (B) WITHDRAWAL OF ALL BUT SURVEILLANCE ACTIVITY OVER FIVE YEAR PERIOD WITH THIS ACTIVITY COMPLETELY CIVILIANIZED BY END OF PERIOD. FONMIN NOT SURE WHICH PROPOSAL WILL BE PUT FORWARD. FONMIN SAID COMMUNISTS HAVE AGREED IN PRIVATE THAT COMPLETE WITHDRAWAL OF MILITARY FORCES NEED NOT BE ACCOMPLISHED DURING ELECTORAL TERM WHICH EXPIRES MID-1975 BUT THEY WANT A SPECIFIED TIMETABLE OF MILITARY WITHDRAWAL AND WITHDRAWAL OF FACILITIES NOT TO EXCEED FOUR OR FIVE YEARS. PRIMIN'S SHIFT RESULTS FROM CONCERN TO KEEP PRESENT GOVT IN POWER AND ALSO PREVENT RIFT IN PROGRESSIVE PARTY. FONMIN SAID PURE LOCAL POLITICAL PARTY POLITICS AND DESIRE TO REMAIN IN GOVT AT ALL COSTS, WHICH (IRONICALLY) FONMIN CALLS "UNSTATEMANSHIP". FONMIN SAYS PRIMIN'S POSITION MAY WELL BE THAT HE ASSUMES AFTER THE NEXT ELECTION THERE WILL BE A CHANGE OF ATTITUDE ON THE PART OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT AND PERHAPS THE IDF RENUNCIATION CAN BE REVOKED. THIS, OF COURSE, IS A DANGEROUS ASSUMPTION.

4. STABILITY OF GOVT: FONMIN CONVINCED GOVT WILL FALL SOON. HE SAID INEVITABLE SINCE BJARNI GUDNASON, FORMER OLL MEMBER WHO DEFECTED AND FORMED NEW PARTY COUPLE WEEKS AGO, ADVISED PRIMIN YESTERDAY THAT HE WILL VOTE AGAINST GOI REVENUE BILL IF IT CONTAINS INCREASE IN SALES TAX, WHICH GOI FEELS HAS NO CHOICE BUT TO PROPOSE. UNLESS THERE IS A DEFECTION FROM IP OR SDP PARTIES TO OFFSET GUDNASON, GOI WILL NOT HAVE MAJORITY NEEDED TO PASS REVENUE BILL AND GOVT WILL INDEED HAVE TO FALL. QUESTION IS WHETHER REVENUE BILL OR DEFENSE BILL WILL BE SUBMITTED FIRST. GUDNASON EXTREMELY ANTI-IDF SO POSSIBILITY OF COMPROMISE SAVING THE GOVT EXISTS.

5. FONMIN LAMENTED HE WISHED HE HAD PAID ATTENTION TO OUR WARNING THAT IF HE CONTINUED TO TAKE VACILLATING AND WEAK POSITION ON BASE ISSUE HE PERSONALLY WOULD LOSE TOO. HE SAID THIS HAS PROVEN TO BE RIGHT AND HE FINDS HE HAS LOST PRESTIGE BOTH WITHIN PROGRESSIVE PARTY AND AMONG ICELANDIC PUBLIC IN GENERAL. I SUGGESTED IT WAS NOT TOO LATE TO START ACTING LIKE STATESMAN AND TO COME OUT STRONGLY FOR BASE. HE REPLIED HE HAS DECIDED TO DO JUST THAT. HIS FIRST ACTION WITHIN THIS NEW SPIRIT WAS TO
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REQUEST NATO SEC GEN LUNS TO RELEASE SECTIONS OF NATO REPORT OF SEPTEMBER TO PUBLIC, WHICH HE SAID BEING DONE AT BRUSSELS TODAY.

6. SITE OF JAN 15 ROUND OF NEGOTIATIONS: FONMIN WOULD LIKE TO GO TO WASHINGTON BUT BELIEVES NEW TURN OF EVENTS MAKES THIS UNLIKELY IN VIEW ESPECIALLY OF PARA TWO ABOVE. HE SAID HE WILL HAVE TO BE UNDER THE CONSTANT EYE OF THE PRIMIN AND PP DEFENSE COMMITTEE. HE ALSO SAID THE "TWO MAGNUSES" (KJARTANSSON AND MTORFI OLAFSSON) WILL INSIST ON ACCOMPANYING HIM TO WASHINGTON WHEREAS HE CAN RESIST THIS IF SESSIONS HELD IN REYKJAVIK (---ILLOGICAL REASONING IN MY OPINION). HE SUGGESTED FINAL DECISION ON SITE BE POSTPONED A WEEK.

7. COMMENT: NEEDLESS TO SAY, THIS RECENT TURN OF EVENTS , WHICH WE PREVIOUSLY REPORTED AS A POSSIBILITY, IS NOT ENCOURAGING. I SHALL ENDEAVOR TO SEEK PRIVATE MEETING WITH PRIMIN BEFORE DEC 28. ANY GUIDANCE FROM WASHINGTON BEFORE THEN WOULD BE WELCOME. IRVING

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED SECDEF NOR CINCLANT.

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